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GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING

Public community colleges are multi-purpose institutions. Most are required by law to maintain an "open door" admissions policy. As a result, junior college student bodies are notably heterogeneous in range and type of ability, in high school achievement, in vocational goals, in motivation, and in age. Effective guidance and counseling programs seem to be essential if the institutions are to make good on their claim of "providing educational opportunities to all people."

This issue of *Junior College Research Review* examines research-related documents that focus on the efficacy of junior college guidance and counseling. Documents reviewed here were selected from materials received and processed at the ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior College Information and all have been indexed and abstracted in *Research in Education.*

Review

In the summer of 1965, Phoenix College (Arizona) offered a pilot program of group counseling for prospective freshman (ED 013 071). Student volunteers were obtained through newspaper publicity and the promotional efforts of high school counselors who informed graduating seniors of the availability of the counseling program.

Of the 267 counselees accepted into the program, 45 were assigned to a control (non-counseled) group. The remaining students were divided into 22 experimental (counseled groups) averaging 12 students each. Experimental groups met for two hours daily for three days within a one-week period or twice weekly over a four-week period. The first meeting was devoted to interpretation of vocational interest tests, American College Test (ACT) scores, and the predication of first semester grades. Other meetings were education centered, focusing on such topics as: school policies, curricular offerings, and registration procedures. Students were encouraged to identify and investigate curricula most likely to be compatible with their measured interests, aptitudes, and academic potential. Other meetings explored vocational and career information.

To assess counseling effectiveness, the control (non-counseled) and experimental (counseled) groups were compared by grade point averages, semester hours earned, and dropout rates. Counseled groups achieved at significantly higher levels than the control group on all criteria except for semester hours earned.

At the end of one semester, the non-counseled group incurred a dropout rate about three times greater than the counseled group. Mean grade point averages of students surviving after one semester were also significantly in favor of the counseled group. Data collected after two semesters of attendance substantiated the findings of the one semester.

San Bernardino Valley College and ten of its surrounding high schools entered into a cooperative venture entitled, "Project Accent," to develop a program of counseling and instruction in auto mechanics, applied electronics, and office occupations training in Grades 11 through 14 (ED 013 074). The program was designed primarily to reduce the enormous student attrition rate in these three vocational areas. Follow-up studies showed that, of the thousands of students who had entered the programs in previous years, only a few hundred had persisted to second-semester courses, and less than five per cent of the original enrollees remained for a year.

"Project Accent" involved a three-part plan to: (1) retrain guidance counselors to increase their understanding of and effectiveness in vocational-technical counseling; (2) revise course outlines for all grade levels in these subject areas to designate information as "essential," "desirable," or "nice to know" with respect to the accomplishment of stated tasks, and (3) improve the image of vocational-technical courses through such activities as field trips, contests and distribution of free materials.

To retrain guidance counselors for "Project Accent," a Laboratory was conceived that would provide . . . a more rational basis for the formation of counselor attitudes about vocational-technical jobs and to insure that enrolling students received accurate information from counselors regarding job and training opportunities in the vocational-technical areas. Specifically, the Laboratory would:

1) expose counselors to real job and task experience as well as to the requirements of the selected vocations;

2) provide visits and field trips to job sites and training facilities where employment and training are available for students in vocational-technical fields so that counselors would be exposed to real induction testing and training situations as with any other candidate for employment;

3) inform counselors concerning job opportunities, job requirements, promotions, salaries and work conditions in the local area, the contacts to be established between the counselors, and community agencies, and employers resulting in improved placement, more realistic counseling, and the development of more positive counselor attitudes toward careers in vocational and technical fields; and

4) schedule counselor visits to vocational schools.

Riverside City College conducted a questionnaire-survey to discern student reactions to its counseling program (ED 014 287). In this study, the majority of the students queried indicated they normally solved their problems without counseling assistance. Students identified educational and vocational planning, academic matters, and grades as areas they considered appropriate concerns for college counselors. Family, personal-social, and emotional problems were not considered appropriate areas for the college counselor.

The Riverside study suggested a need for clarification of the counselor's role and function. The study also recommended increased counselor availability to students and improved communication between students and counselors.

Greenfield Community College (Massachusetts) conducted research to determine, (1) how effective a summer remedial program was in preparing underachieving high school graduates for successful completion of the first semester of a two-year terminal program, and (2) if vocational-personal counseling had an effect on student achievement in that program (ED 010 120). The subjects were forty students who had failed to meet normal college admission requirements.

A seven-week summer remedial program was administered, after which the students were enrolled in regular junior college classes. On the basis of pre- and post-remediation test information, twenty students were selected for counseling. Effects of the program were evaluated in terms of student academic growth — defined primarily as grade point average. Statistical analyses of data indicated that the remedial program helped improve student scores on the Lorge-Thorndike Test of Intelligence, the Davis Reading Test, and the Scholastic Aptitude Test.

Student performance (first semester's grade point average) was not affected by the variable of personal-vocational counseling: non-counseled students persisted and achieved as well as the counseled. The study concluded that traditional prediction barometers (high school grade point averages, recommendations of teachers and counselors, rank in class, and Scholastic Aptitude Test results) cannot be used effectively to ferret out students who are likely to succeed in post-high school, two-year occupational programs.

To determine the value of pre-registration counseling, San Mateo College conducted a study to rate student assessment of (1) his relationship with his counselor, (2) the ap-

propriateness of his choice of major, (3) the suitability of his schedule, and (4) his preparation for registration. 761 students (8.5 per cent of the total student body) were randomly selected from those who registered between the second and fourth weeks of the fall 1967 semester (ED 017 231). These students filled out a questionnaire showing their degree of satisfaction with various aspects of the program; e.g., rapport, advisement, and counseling. Thirty-three counselors also completed the questionnaire to indicate the importance they attached to each segment of their functions. The counselors' rating of importance was compared with the students' ranking of how well the functions were carried out. Students' degrees of satisfaction were correlated with age, choice of major, duration of counseling session, and several other influencing factors.

The greatest flaw in the pre-registration procedures appeared to be a shortage of time for student interviews. The study suggested procedures for alleviating this weakness.

Summary

Public community colleges are and will continue to be "open-door" colleges. The open-door admissions policy can be effective only if students are able to achieve their educational goals. Guidance and counseling services of the two-year college must contribute to the success of that endeavor. At the present time, it cannot be maintained that these services have been even remotely successful in (1) reducing student attrition, (2) providing adequate career information, or (3) placing students in programs where they have a good chance to succeed (ED 013 065). Evaluation of these programs is virtually non-existent; their effects must still be demonstrated.

John E. Roueche

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Abstracts of documents processed in the ERIC system may be found in *Research in Education*, a publication of the U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. *Research and Education* may be ordered from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. (Single copy, $1.00; annual subscription of 12 issues, $11.00.)

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